CONFERENCE OF THE EIGHTEEN-NATION COMMITTEE ON DISARMAMENT

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ENGLISH

FINAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE FOUR HUNDRED AND TENTH MEETING

held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Tuesday, 13 May 1969, at 10.30 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. S.A. FRAZAO (Brazil)

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PRESENT AT THE TABLE

Brazil:	Mr. S.A. FRAZAO
	Mr. C.A. de SOUZA e SILVA
	Mr. L.F. PALMEIRA LAMPREIA
	Mr. J. NOGUEIRA FILHO
Bulgaria:	Mr. K. CHRISTOV
	Mr. M. KARASSIMEONOV
	Mr. I. PEINIRDJIEV
Burma:	U KYAW MIN
Canada:	Mr. G. IGNATIEFF
	Mr. J.R. MORDEN
Czechoslovakia:	Mr. T. LAHODA
	Mr. V. SAFAR
	Mr. J. STRUCKA
Ethiopia:	Mr. A. ZELLEKE
India:	Mr. M.A. HUSAIN
	Mr. N. KRISHNAN
	Mr. K.P. JAIN
Italy:	Mr. R. CARACCIOLO
	Mr. F. LUCIOLI OTTIERI
	Mr. R. BORSARELLI
	Mr. U. PESTALOZZA
Mexico:	Miss E. AGUIRRE
	Mr. H. CARDENAS RODRIGUEZ
Nigeria:	Alhaji SULE KOLO
	Mr. C.O. HOLLIST
	Mr. L.A. MALIKI

DEPOSITORY

Poland:	Mr. H. JAROSZEK
	Mr. K. ZYBYLSKI
	Mr. H. STEPOSZ
	Mr. S. DABROWA
Romania:	Mr. V. CONSTANTINESCO
	Mr. V. TARZIORU
	Mr. C. GEORGESCO
	Mr. C. MITRAN
Sweden:	Mr. A. EDELSTAM
	Mr. S. ERICSON
	Mr. R. BOMAN
Union of Soviet Socialist Republics:	Mr. A.A. ROSHCHIN
	Mr. I.I. TCHEPROV
	Mr. N.S. KISHILOV
United Arab Republic:	Mr. O. SIRRY
	Mr. E.S. El REEDY
	Mr. M. ISMAIL
United Kingdom:	Mr. F. MULLEY
	Mr. I.F. PORTER
	Mr. W.N. HILLIER-FRY
	Miss V. HUGHES
United States of America:	Mr. A.S. FISHER
	Mr. C. GLEYSTEEN
	Mr. W. GIVAN
	Mr. R.L. McCORMACK
Special Representative of the Secretary-General	Mr. D. PROTITCH
Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General:	Mr. W. EPSTEIN

1. The CHAIRMAN (Brazil): I declare open the 410th plenary meeting of the Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament.

2. Mr. IGNATIEFF (Canada): The Canadian delegation has now had the opportunity to give preliminary consideration to the Soviet draft treaty on prohibition of the use for military purposes of the sea-bed and the ocean floor and the subsoil thereof (ENDC/240). We have also listened with great interest to the statements which have been made on this subject, especially those by the representatives of the United States at our meeting on 25 March (ENDC/PV.397, paras. 26-43), and the Soviet Union at our meeting on 3 April (ENDC/PV.400, paras. 2 et seq.) and again at our meeting on 8 May (ENDC/PV.409, paras. 18 et seq.). Today I do not propose to address my remarks directly to or to go too much into the details of the draft Soviet treaty, nor shall I attempt at this stage of our discussions to delineate a definitive Canadian position on the issues it raises. Instead, my purpose is to offer some preliminary comments and to put forth some very tentative suggestions and ideas that I hope may be helpful in our progress towards agreement.

3. Throughout the discussions in the General Assembly we made it clear that Canada would give its full support to any statement, declaration or resolution which would establish that the largest possible area of the sea-bed and ocean floor should be reserved exclusively for peaceful purposes. Such an attitude seems to us to follow logically from our subscription to the principles of the United Nations Charter, among which the maintenance of international peace and security occupies such an important place. A number of representatives during those discussions held the view that the expression "exclusively for peaceful purposes" should not be given an interpretation so wide as to deprive it of logic and meaning. The Canadian Government associated itself with that view in its intervention in the First Committee of the General Assembly on 5 November 1968 when the Canadian representative stated:

> "We are aware that the term 'peaceful purposes' is open to more than one interpretation. We do not interpret the phrase as prohibiting all military uses. While we strongly oppose military installations for offensive purposes, we have reservations about the desirability of precluding the use of the sea-bed adjacent to a coastal State for purely defensive purposes. In sum, we consider that the exploitation and use of the sea-bed and the ocean floor beyond the limits of national jurisdiction should be carried out in a manner consistent with the United Nations Charter". (A/C.1/PV.1599, provisional, p.28)

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4. We recognize that just as the Charter did not succeed by its mere existence in solving all the problems of the international community, similarly the simple reiteration of the principle of the use of the deep ocean floor for peaceful purposes would be insufficient to guarantee that a new armaments race would not occur in that part of the globe. Practical measures are required to achieve our objectives and in particular to resolve what we have regarded as the most urgent problem — namely, the prohibition of the emplacement of all nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction on the sea-bed and ocean floor. We recognize that since we subscribe to the objective of general and complete disarmament, other measures relating to the sea-bed and ocean floor will have to be envisaged in due course. However, what is now within our grasp is a solution which rests on a limited and practical basis, which will be assured of the agreement of a large number of States -- especially that of the maritime States well equipped to exploit the ocean depths -- and which will include a system of verification of compliance adequate to assure all signatory States that the agreed prohibitions are being observed. That is, of course, of direct concern to a country such as Canada which has frontiers on three of the world's great oceans — the Atlantic, the Pacific and the Arctic.

5. One idea that might be considered, for example, in elaborating an agreement prohibiting the emplacement on, within, beneath, or fixed to the sea-bed or ocean floor, beyond a zone extending twelve miles from the base lines used in defining the limits of the territorial sea of coastal States, is the prohibition of:

(a) all nuclear weapons and all weapons of mass destruction;

(b) all components of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction;

(c) storage containers, launching platforms or vehicles for deployment or delivery of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction;

(d) all other weapons, military activities, undersea bases or fortifications from which military action could be undertaken against the territory, territorial sea or air space of another State,
including but not limited to:

(i) shore bombardment weapons or systems

(ii) devices capable of disrupting communications, air and maritime navigation and other peaceful pursuits

(iii) devices to counter, disrupt, neutralize or render ineffective any defensive instruments of another State -- that is, detection, surveillance, defensive fire control and so on,

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(iv) installations from which manned incursions could be mounted against another State

(v) chemical or other means of destroying or denying the sea-bed resources of another State.

That idea would, of course, present some verification problems. However, we are not convinced that these problems would be any more difficult than those involved in verifying the proposals put forward by the representatives of the USSR and the United States.

6. It will be apparent from what I have just said that we consider that article 1 of the Soviet draft treaty is badly lacking in precision. For example, the second paragraph of article 1 contains words and phrases which are too imprecise -- namely, "structures", "installations", and "other objects of a military nature". We share some of the misgivings expressed by our Indian colleague (ENDC/PV.404, paras. 65-71), because Canada, like India, has an extensive coastline and many large islands which lie far from our mainland. Under Article 51 of the United Nations Charter we cannot accept the proposition that Canada should be prohibited from placing in coastal waterways, straits and the ocean depths at far greater distances than twelve miles surveillance devices which can detect the approach to our shores of ships, submarines or weapons, so long as these military vehicles have freedom to navigate in the approaches to our shores. Similar devices are used in traffic control and as navigational aids. Some are moored, others are not. There would be other problems resulting from a sweeping general prohibition, but our difficulty in the case I have cited is the most obvious.

7. As I mentioned earlier, we believe that disarmament prohibitions within territorial waters fall outside the scope of the present negotiations, and already there seems to be some consensus in this Conference on a narrow zone or coastal band of twelve miles within which coastal States would have unrestricted rights with respect to military activities. There is, however, a potential area of difficulty presented by this concept of the narrow coastal band. I refer to the fact that since many States have a territorial sea of less than twelve miles, a gap is left between the outer limits of their territorial sea and the outer limits of the twelve-mile coastal band. Now I know that the representative of the Soviet Union offered assurances on this point at our meeting on 8 May (ENDC/PV.400, para. 35); nevertheless, according to the present text of the Soviet draft treaty, this area would not be covered by the treaty's prohibitons. Accordingly, it may be arguable that this belt would be open to unrestricted military

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activity by any State and not only the coastal State. Canada could not, of course, accept such a situation, nor, presumably, could any other maritime Power.

8. This problem of the gap between the twelve-mile coastal band and the territorial sea of many States suggests that we should consider another, not unrelated problem. Under existing international law a coastal State exercises over the continental shelf sovereign rights for the purpose of exploring it and exploiting its natural resources. No other State may undertake these activities, or undertake any research on the continental shelf, without the consent of the coastal State. In discussion of this question elsewhere, some representatives have maintained that the jurisdiction of the coastal State does not extend to the freedom to install structures or devices which are unrelated to the "exploration and exploitation of the natural resources" of the continental shelf — for example, purely defensive listening devices. It can readily be concluded, however, that States are not likely to ignore their security requirements simply because the Geneva Convention of 1958 on the Continental Shelf[1/] is silent or unclear on the subject. Moreover, it can be argued with greater force that, in spite of the provisions of that Convention which concern freedom of navigation and the laying of submarine cables and pipelines, it is difficult to reconcile the coastal State's sovereign rights with freedom of military activity of any sort by foreign States on its continental shelf. Certainly Canada could not accept such activity on its continental shelf.

9. One suggestion that has been advanced as a means of circumventing some of these difficulties is the concept of a defensive zone adjacent to the proposed twelve-mile security band extending perhaps 200 or more miles from the outer limits of that twelve-mile band. The same general prohibitions of the proposed treaty could apply within this 200-mile defensive zone, with one exception — namely, that the coastal State, and only the coastal State, would be allowed to undertake in that zone whatever limited defensive activities were permitted under the treaty. No other State could carry out such activities in the area in question except with the explicit consent of the coastal State. Such an arrangement would also take into account the fact that few States could view with equanimity purportedly defensive activities undertaken by another State in areas of the sea-bed adjacent to their coasts.

1/ United Nations Treaty Series, vol. 499, pp.311 et seq.

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10. The word "reciprocity" in the Soviet text (article II) does not seem to us to represent a reasonable basis for verification procedures. It suggests that only States which place objects on the sea-bed or ocean floor acquire the right to inspect submarine installations emplaced by another State. If that is the intended meaning, we expect we would not be alone in finding it unsatisfactory. In fact, I inferred from the remarks of the representative of the United Arab Republic at our meeting on 15 April (ENDC/PV.403, para. 35) that he also has reservations about this aspect of article II. Likewise, the views expressed by the representative of India at our meeting on 17 April (ENDC/PV.404, para. 70) suggested to my delegation that the reference to reciprocity had raised questions in his mind. At our meeting on 22 April the representatives of Sweden (ENDC/PV.405, paras. 92 and 93) and Brazil (ibid. para. 30) referred to difficulties which would possibly arise, at least under certain interpretations of reciprocity. The parallel with the outer space Treaty (General Assembly resolution 2222 (XXI), annex) seems to us to be overdrawn. The verification procedures will need to have other characteristics in order to accommodate States which may feel threatened and to allow them in some way to participate in the inspection procedures.

11. As I said in my opening statement on 20 March: "it has always been Canadian policy to press ahead with any subject which holds out the promise of progress". (ENDC/PV.396, para. 62) It is in that spirit that I have presented these general views of the problem of the reservation of the sea-bed and ocean floor exclusively for peaceful purposes. We regard this question as important since an agreement would prevent the extension of the nuclear arms race to a new environment. We must remember, however, that outside the scope of the current negotiations are two important questions: superjacent waters in which submarines are potentially among the most potent of mobile launching platforms for offensive nuclear weapons of mass destruction; and the exclusion pertaining to the proposed coastal band or zone.

12. It continues to be our position also that greater urgency should be attached to measures connected with ending the nuclear arms race and to nuclear disarmament arising out of the promises undertaken by the nuclear Powers under article VI of the non-proliferation Treaty (ENDC/226*). As I have said before, consideration of the problems of the sea-bed should not pre-empt the time of the Committee. In this context I rely on the assurances given by one of our co-Chairmen — the representative of the United States of America — at our meeting on 25 March, that the monopoly of time which the non-proliferation Treaty negotations produced will not be repeated now in connexion with some other arms control measures (ENDC/PV.397, para. 14).

13. Mr. CHRISTOV (Bulgaria) (translation from French): Before stating the views of my delegation on the item entitled "Prevention of an arms race on the sea-bed" which appears on the Committee's agenda (ENDC/236, p.3), I should like to recall that the Bulgarian Government has for a long time been particularly interested in the problems of the use of the sea-bed. Constantly guided by the idea that all activities in that sphere should be reserved exclusively for peaceful purposes, and in conformity with its peaceful policy, the Bulgarian Government was one of the first to endeavour to draw attention to the necessity of prohibiting the use of the sea-bed for military purposes.

14. With that aim in view, at the United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea, held in Geneva in 1958, the Bulgarian delegation made a proposal in the Fourth Committee of that Conference to prohibit the use of the continental shelf for military purposes. The Bulgarian proposal, submitted in the form of a paragraph to be added to article 71 of the draft then under discussion, read as follows: "The coastal State shall not use the continental shelf for the purpose of building military bases or installations". (A/CONF.13/C.4/L.41/Rev.1)

15. That suffices, we believe, to explain the satisfaction of my delegation at the presentation by the Soviet Union on 18 March of the draft treaty on prohibition of the use for military purposes of the sea-bed and the ocean floor and the subsoil thereof (ENDC/240). I must also say that this satisfaction is accompanied by the hope that the problem - which is of such great importance - will find, thanks to the Soviet Government's initiative, an adequate solution. Meanwhile we have studied with the greatest care the draft treaty submitted by the Soviet delegation for the Committee's examination. At the same time we have followed with the closest attention the important statements made here on the subject.

16. The problems relating to the use of the sea-bed are of paramount concern to all countries; that has been made abundantly clear by the discussion of those problems in the United Nations, by the work carried out in the Ad Hoc Committee to Study the Peaceful Uses of the Sea-Bed, and by the discussion that is going on in our Committee. That is a many-faceted concern which relates simultaneously to the field of disarmament and to a field in which, according to the highly competent opinion of scientists and technicians, vast prospects have been opened up for the exploitation of this enormous reservoir of riches of every kind.

17. As a first step it is necessary to prohibit immediately the use of the sea-bed for military purposes, in order — of course — to prevent the arms race from spreading to these new areas which make up 70 per cent of the surface of the globe. But it is also a matter of demilitarizing that vast environment, as an absolutely indispensable pre-requisite for making it accessible for peaceful uses. It is the task of the Eighteen-

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Nation Committee on Disarmament to find the means of preventing an arms race on the sea-bed. The forty-two-nation Committee on the Peaceful Uses of the Sea-Bed has been entrusted by General Assembly resolution 2467 A (XXIII) with the task of "/ensuring/ the exploitation of /the/ resources /of the sea-bed/ for the benefit of mankind".

18. In the view of my delegation the fact that those two tasks have been entrusted — for very obvious reasons — to different bodies should not give the impression that it is possible to solve the problems of peaceful utilization without solving the basic problem, which is precisely demilitarization, that is, the problem which has been entrusted to the Eighteen-Nation Committee. We believe that the international community has set itself an objective which is of doubly exceptional importance and which consists in endeavouring simultaneously to prevent an arms race on the sea-bed and to ensure the peaceful use of that area in the interest of all countries.

19. A number of delegations have proved here, forcefully and convincingly, the urgent importance of preventing an arms race on the sea-bed because, owing to technical progress, the means are already available to transform what even yesterday appeared to be a remote threat into a well-defined danger. And in view of the scale that such a new arms race would assume, we know what the nature of this new danger, which would be added to so many others, would be. We have therefore been greatly encouraged to note that the principle of preventing such an arms race is meeting with such wide approval.

20. I should like in this connexion, and among other things, to draw the attention of the Committee to certain aspects of the deliberations in the forty-two-nation Committee which in our view have been given eloquent expression in its decisions. That Committee has already done very useful work. It does not have to deal with the problems which are our own, but it seems to us that it is not mere coincidence that the words which recur most often in its documents are precisely those which express a fundamental requirement, namely, to ensure the use of the sea-bed exclusively for peaceful purposes. Thus, for example, the Legal Working Group of the Ad Hoc Committee considered the question of preparing, for submission to the General Assembly, a draft declaration on the principles governing the peaceful uses of the sea-bed which would include the following basic principle: "... that the sea-bed, the ocean floor and the subsoil thereof be used exclusively for peaceful purposes and for the benefit of mankind;". (A/7230, annex II, para. 43)

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21. Several members of the Committee have taken initiatives leading in the same direction. In a working paper on a draft declaration of general principles on the use of the sea-bed, fifteen countries members of the Committee suggested that the General Assembly should declare in the first place that

> "The exploration, use and exploitation of the sea-bed and ocean floor, and the subsoil thereof ... shall be carried on exclusively for peaceful purposes". (ibid., p. 63)

22. Moreover, resolution 2467 A (XXIII) reaffirms those same principles with vigour and clarity and widens their scope and meaning with a well-defined aim, namely, to guarantee to all countries access to the resources of the sea-bed with full equality of rights, its use for exclusively peaceful purposes and the exploitation of its resources in the interests of humanity as a whole. I believe it would be useful to dwell on the meaning of the expressions "exclusively for peaceful purposes" and "in the interests of humanity as a whole". The conclusion to be drawn is in our opinion clear-cut and categoric.

23. So far as my delegation is concerned, we venture to think that those words and the context in which they are used express, besides the legitimate desire of all countries to share in the utilization of the resources of the sea-bed, a well-founded apprehension and a deep-rooted conviction: that the arms race and utilization for military purposes will make impossible any use of the sea-bed for peaceful purposes. In other words, the use of the resources of the sea-bed is possible only if conditions are created which guarantee its use exclusively for peaceful purposes. Consequently, the General Assembly resolutions, and more particularly those of the twenty-second and twenty-third sessions, which were adopted almost unanimously, as well as the work of the Committee specially entrusted with the study of the question, leave no ambiguity as to the will of the States Members of the United Nations to prevent an arms race on the sea-bed and to ensure the use of the sea-bed exclusively for peaceful purposes.

24. Therefore we are gratified that the Soviet delegation has presented a draft treaty which, as I have already stated, we have welcomed with the greatest satisfaction. In our view this draft treaty approaches the problem clearly, realistically and effectively, both as regards measures to prevent an arms race and as regards the aspects relating to the field of the peaceful use of the sea-bed and the ocean floor. The solution proposed in this draft treaty is calculated to meet the particular interests of various countries as well as the general interests of the international community. In that respect the Soviet draft treaty is in complete accord with the spirit and the letter of the General Assembly resolutions of which I have spoken and with the principles of the United Nations

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Charter. It is based on the same principles and the same ideas as the Antarctic Treaty[2/] and the Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space (General Assembly resolution 2222 (XXI) annex).

25. By the total prohibition, under article 1, of placing on the sea-bed objects with nuclear weapons or any other types of weapons of mass destruction, and of setting up military bases, structures, installations, fortifications and other objects of a military nature, the Soviet draft treaty attains the goal which all agreements of this nature should aim at — it will prevent an arms race on the sea-bed by establishing a regime of complete demilitarization of the sea-bed beyond the twelve-mile maritime zone of coastal States. That provision, essential in every respect, also solves the problem of verification which, under article 2 of the draft treaty, will cover all installations and structures on the sea-bed on the basis of free access and reciprocity by the States parties to the treaty.

26. We are convinced that the solution contained in the Soviet draft treaty, like the solutions contained in the Antarctic Treaty and in the outer space Treaty is the only one likely to prevent an arms race on the sea-bed. It is, moreover, the only one likely to ensure the rights of all countries, to guarantee the peaceful use of that area, to take into account the interest of humanity as a whole and to make fruitful international co-operation possible.

27. For those reasons my delegation supports the Soviet delegation's draft treaty without reservation and in the deepest conviction that an agreement on complete demilitarization of the sea-bed and the ocean floor will be a contribution of the greatest importance to the progress of negotiations on disarmament and to the lessening of international tension. We have been happy to note that the Soviet draft treaty and the principles on which it is based have met with the approval of the majority of delegations seated round this table. The representative of Ethiopia stated in his intervention on 10 April:

> "... we should like to give our agreement in principle to the general principle of the complete demilitarization of the sea-bed and the ocean floor as contained in the draft treaty submitted by the Soviet Union, a principle which corresponds to the spirit behind General Assembly resolution 2467 (XXIII)". (ENDC/PV.402, para. 98)

That opinion is shared by the delegations of the United Arab Republic, India, Brazil, Sweden, Mexico and the socialist countries.

2/ United Nations Treaty Series, vol. 402, pp. 71 et seq.

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28. We have carefully studied all the comments made on the subject and especially those concerning the three points which are the heart of the problem, that is, those relating to the geographic area to be covered by a future treaty, to the scope of the prohibition and to the system of verification. Of course, we have considered with attention and with an open mind all the objections and reservations put forward in regard to the Soviet draft treaty by certain delegations. Although no other draft or working paper has been submitted to the Committee, it seems that essentially these reservations and objections relate particularly to the very notion of demilitarization, as it should be achieved under the treaty, and to the control problems which derive from it.

29. Unlike the Soviet draft treaty, which advocates total demilitarization of the sea-bed and open and accessible verification on a basis of reciprocity, some delegations suggest that the problems of demilitarization of the sea-bed and the ocean floor should be reduced to a partial prohibition limited to weapons of mass destruction, nuclear and other, and consequently that verification should be limited to installations of that nature. In support of that thesis it has been said that total demilitarization of the sea-bed would not be possible, that it would probably be harmful, and that it would pose insurmountable verification problems.

30. With all the respect that my delegation has always shown for the opinions of other delegations, we venture to point out that it is rather the contrary that is true. In our view the arms race, despite its various aspects, must be considered as a whole which cannot be divided in two. And by the very nature of things it seems to us impossible to prohibit one part -- in the present case the race in weapons of mass destruction -- and to let the other part, the race in conventional weapons, take its course. An undertaking of that nature, in our opinion, would be unfeasible, even if one had only to take into account the difficulty of distinguishing between an installation that would be used to launch conventional weapons and an installation that could be used to launch weapons of mass destruction. That difficulty was referred to most relevantly by Ambassador Jaroszek of Poland in his statement on 24 April (ENDC/PV.406, paras.19 and 20). Even if it were possible to conclude such an agreement, can one be sure that it would not be interpreted as an instrument sanctioning and encouraging the race in existing conventional weapons and in those which certainly would be specially designed for that purpose, in an atmosphere of rivalry which it is easy to imagine?

31. Consequently, we believe that it is precisely partial demilitarization which will not be viable. Indeed it is difficult to see how an agreement on partial

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demilitarization -- which, properly speaking, would not be demilitarization at all -- could prevent a race in so-called conventional weapons, a race which such an agreement not only would authorize but, we believe, would in the end stimulate and encourage. Let me say in passing that we do not believe that the task entrusted to the Committee is to draft an agreement authorizing a race in conventional weapons on the sea-bed. It is precisely that consequence -- inevitable, in our opinion -- which would be harmful and dangerous for all the efforts aimed at preventing an arms race on the sea-bed.

32. Some fears have been expressed that total demilitarization would hamper means of communication, means indispensable to navigation, and so on. So far as we know, it has not been proved that conventional weapons are emplaced on the sea-bed in order to facilitate communications and navigation. On the contrary, the total demilitarization of the sea-bed will certainly contribute to improving the conditions for using all the means designed for peaceful purposes, and of course no one is thinking of placing obstacles in the way of that peaceful activity. The statements made by the representative of the Soviet Union, Mr. Roshchin, on 3 April (ENDC/PV.400) and on 8 May (ENDC/PV.409) are absolutely convincing in that respect.

33. Another argument -- concerning the participation of military personnel in exploration and scientific research activities -- does not seem to us to justify the opposition to the idea of total demilitarization. That same problem arose during the drafting of the Antarctic Treaty and the outer space Treaty and did not prevent the reaching of agreements which, in everyone's opinion, have proved their worth. Hence, we cannot believe that these are insurmountable difficulties.

34. Consistently with all that I have just said, we are of the opinion that partial measures such as those envisaged on the basis of such concepts are not of a nature to provide an adequate solution to the problem. For reasons which appear obvious to us they do not correspond to the aim we are seeking to achieve. We have already said that the partial limitation of an arms race on the sea-bed would be contrary to resolutions 2340 (XXII) and 2467 (XXIII) of the General Assembly, which in adopting them was guided by the unanimous desire to prevent an arms race on the sea-bed, and, in our opinion, the race as a whole, and to reserve the use of the sea-bed exclusively for peaceful purposes.

35. In this connexion we should focus our attention for a moment on an aspect of the problem which, in our view, is extremely serious. It seems to us that if we do not succeed in preventing the arms race or if the agreement limits the prohibition of the

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use of the sea-bed to weapons of mass destruction, letting conventional militarization take its course, a situation pregnant with consequences would inevitably be created for the simple reason that, in the present state of affairs, only some countries have the means necessary to use the sea-bed for military purposes and that where the large majority of countries are concerned, this is not so. Most countries therefore will rightly feel threatened by military activities which, although related to conventional weapons, would be none the less disquieting.

36. It is almost superfluous to add that utilization for military purposes, even if limited to conventional weapons, is therefore incompatible with peaceful exploration and exploitation. Any installation of a military nature will be an obstacle in that respect. The arms race, the emplacement of weapons of any kind whatsoever, are the very negation of the concepts of collaboration, of respect for the rights of others, and of the interests of humanity as a whole.

37. As for the problem of verification, I shall confine myself to saying that we share the opinion expressed by several other delegations that it is precisely partial demilitarization that will create insurmountable obstacles and difficulties with regard to control. Control will be infinitely easier to achieve in the case of prohibition of all military activities and on the basis of the conditions contained in the Soviet draft treaty. The example of the Antarctic Treaty and the outer space Treaty provides in this respect perfect proof in confirmation of this conviction of ours.

38. Mr. CARACCIOLO (Italy) (translation from French): In my statement today I should like to put forward the point of view of the Italian delegation on the question of the demilitarization of the sea-bed and the ocean floor.

39. The Italian delegation has listened attentively to the opinions expressed on this subject by various delegations. In particular, it has studied with interest the draft treaty submitted by the Soviet delegation (ENDC/240), as well as the criteria proposed by the United States delegation for consideration of this problem (ENDC/PV.397, paras.26 et seq). The Italian delegation shares the viewpoint expressed here by other governments members of the Eighteen-Nation Committee regarding the great importance of the problem of limiting the military use of the sea-bed and the ocean floor. It is convinced that an agreement on this subject would be extremely useful because it would constitute an effective limitation of the arms race by preventing it from spreading to the vast areas of the sea-bed and the ocean floor, which have up to now been spared. It is also convinced that such an agreement would have positive psychological and political effects on the international level.

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40. However, before dealing with the specific aspects of the problem, I should like briefly to set forth some considerations of a more general nature. On the Italian side, we start from the principle that the problem of the denuclearization of the sea-bed comes within the broader framework of a general policy of non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and of nuclear disarmament. Consequently, the accomplishment of any agreement in that field could not disregard the entry into force and the satisfactory and effective application of the non-proliferation Treaty (ENDC/226*). Similarly, it seems to us that the participation of all the nuclear countries in any agreement to limit nuclear weapons on the sea-bed and the ocean floor would be essential for an agreement to be fully effective. Lastly, if the agreement on limitation were also to cover certain types of conventional weapons, it would be important, for similar reasons, that all the main maritime Powers should be parties to it. To that end, the quorum for entry into force of the agreement should be as large as possible.

41. Coming now to the concrete problem, the Italian delegation agrees with the manner in which the problem has been posed by many delegations which have examined it from a triple aspect: that of the geographical scope of the prohibition -- that is to say, what areas of the sea-bed and the ocean floor should be subjected to the provisions of the agreement; that of the object of the prohibition -- what military activities will be prohibited; and that of the control of the prohibition itself.

42. The Italian delegation shares, moreover, the opinion expressed by the United Kingdom representative in his statement on 17 April (ENDC/PV.404, para.20) that the first two questions must be considered as interdependent. Indeed it seems to us that an agreement relating exclusively to denuclearization of the sea-bed could apply to a more extensive area than that to which an agreement comprising also the prohibition of other military uses would have to apply. Commenting on that triple aspect of the problem of the demilitarization of the sea-bed and the ocean floor, the representative of the Soviet Union in his latest statement, that of 8 May (ENDC/PV.409, paras. 14 et seq.) emphasized that on two of those aspects of a possible treaty -- geographical scope of the prohibition and methods of control -- a consensus of opinion had been noted, and that on the third -- the gamut of prohibited activities -- the point of view of the Soviet Union had been supported by the majority of the delegations which had spoken on that point.

43. I should like to say that if this support relates to the need to reserve the use of the sea-bed for peaceful purposes, the Italian delegation is happy to associate itself with this majority, and I even believe that this majority is in fact composed of all the

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delegations represented here. But this support given to the principle of the peaceful use of the sea-bed neither can nor should overlook the need to ensure the security of coastal States; that concept has, moreover, been raised in one form or another by several delegations. Thus, for instance, the representative of India, speaking on 17 April, stated the following:

> "... the question of sovereignty in respect of territorial waters and sovereign rights in regard to the continental shelf and their importance from the defence and economic points of view would need to be taken carefully into consideration" (ENDC/PV.404, para.68).

The representative of Burma also, in his statement on 6 May, pointed out that the provisions of the contemplated treaty should be such as would ensure: "the security of all coastal States equally, whether nuclear or non-nuclear, large or small" (ENDC/PV.408, para.25).

Lastly, I think I can detect a similar concern in the remarks made earlier today by the representative of Canada.

44. As I now wish to indicate more precisely the ideas of the Italian delegation on the general problem of the demilitarization of the sea-bed and the ocean floor, permit me to examine separately and briefly the three aspects of this problem.

45. As regards the area to be covered by the prohibition, the Soviet delegation, in article 1 of its draft treaty, has proposed the adoption of a criterion of distance from the coast, suggesting provisionally that this distance should be twelve miles. The Italian delegation, for its part, doubts whether such a criterion would be sufficient to guarantee the security of coastal States and, more particularly, that of countries whose geographical configuration is characterized by a very long maritime frontier and which are thus more exposed to attacks from the sea. In fact, we know that the ocean floor has different characteristics in the various parts of the globe. In particular, the existence of a continental shelf exerts a direct influence on the problem of national defence for numerous States. Thus, the excessive restriction of the use of the continental shelf for defensive purposes could, for instance, reduce the useful forewarning and effectiveness of the means for detecting a possible enemy offensive.

46. The Italian delegation would therefore advocate the adoption of an area of application of the prohibition delimited by a bathymetric curve corresponding to a depth of 200 metres, it being understood that the limit of the area could in no case be less than twelve miles from the coast. In our view, the depth of 200 metres neither

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prejudges or hinders in any way the delimitation of the continental shelf, just as the distance of twelve miles, in the view of the Soviet delegation, neither prejudges or hinders in any way the definition of territorial waters.

47. In reply to certain objections that have been raised to the adoption of that criterion, I wish to say that it is in no way intended to create a discrimination in favour of certain States but, on the contrary, is intended to reduce discrimination of a geographical nature which operates to the detriment of those very States. Moreover, this criterion would not mean that the general criterion of the continental shelf would be adopted, because that criterion might require various and complicated surveys; it merely advocates a curve corresponding to a depth fixed and equal for everyone. Finally, we do not see why the adoption of the criterion that we are proposing should set off, as some fear, an arms race on the continental shelf, nor why this criterion would extend national sovereignty beyond its present limits. The criterion that we are proposing meets solely the need to ensure the security of coastal States.

48. Let us now pass to the second problem, that of defining the military activities to be prohibited. Italy, for its part, considers that complete demilitarization consisting of prohibiting all military activities of any kind whatsoever on the whole of the sea-bed and the ocean floor to which the agreement would apply, is not a realistic or acceptable basis for an agreement. There are in fact certain uses of a typically defensive nature — for example, the emplacement of means of communication or the installation of acoustic systems for detecting and facilitating underwater navigation — which, in our opinion, should continue to be authorized in any case.

49. The suggestion made by the United States (ENDC/PV.397, paras. 37 and 41) for an agreement prohibiting solely weapons of mass destruction appears to us to grasp the most significant and urgent aspect of the problem and this suggestion would therefore be easier to carry out. This does not exclude the possibility of envisaging an extension of the prohibition to other military offensive uses which it would be necessary to specify. In any case, an agreement to demilitarize the sea-bed and the ocean floor should identify with precision all the activities and installations which would be prohibited. Thus, for example, it should be specified that the prohibition of weapons of mass destruction extends to the construction of launching platforms and to the emplacement of delivery vehicles.

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50. The objection that identification of the activities and installations to be prohibited would uselessly complicate the problem, and that it would therefore be preferable to adopt the over-simple solution of a total prohibition of all military activities, does not seem to us to be convincing. We consider, in fact, that it is preferable to face up to the difficulties of a selective choice -- a choice which could facilitate the adoption of an appropriate methodology -- rather than commit a much more serious error, that of endangering the security of the contracting States.

51. In any case, if we wish to reach an agreement in this field, we must seek to fill the gap between the two contradictory theses before us, which were expounded to us initially by the Soviet delegation (ENDC/PV.400, paras. 2 et seq.) and by the delegation of the United States (ENDC/PV.397, paras. 30-43). For this purpose, we should like to take up a suggestion made by the delegation of the United Kingdom in the statement by Minister of State Mulley on 17 April. He said:

> "... the right approach is to consider what specific military activities might be banned in the arms control area, however that may be defined" (ENDC/PV.404, para.21).

52. The Italian delegation wishes to ask the delegations of the nuclear Powers which have supported the thesis of a partial and limited prohibition whether, even without a text, they could at least draw up, for the enlightenment of the Committee, a list of the weapons and military installations which should, in their opinion, be prohibited in any case. I note with interest that the Canadian representative has made similar suggestions this morning. It might also be useful for our Committee to have before it a list showing, conversely, which military activities would be authorized or, at least, tolerated. Only an examination of precise data in the fullest possible detail will enable our Committee to come to a decision in a competent and objective manner on the problem of the object of the prohibition applicable to the sea-bed and the ocean floor.

53. I should now like to dwell upon the third panel of our triptych, the problem of control. Italy considers that any agreement establishing a limitation of the military uses of the sea-bed and the ocean floor should be controlled in an effective manner, and that only an international system can ensure the credibility and effectiveness of the control. I confess, for my part, that I do not understand why the need for an international control body has been so strongly felt in the case of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, why it is so laboriously sought with a view to the

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conclusion of an agreement on underground nuclear explosions or an agreement on the limitation of the production of fissionable materials, while it is rejected in the case of the demilitarization of the sea-bed and the ocean floor.

54. The comparison with the Antarctic Treaty of 1959 and the outer space Treaty of 1967 with a view to establishing national controls based on the principle of reciprocity does not appear to us to be really relevant. Unlike the environments to which the aforesaid two treaties relate, the sea-bed is more easily accessible to man, and its utilization, even if to different degrees, is within the reach of a larger number of States. The need for an adequate control system, free of any discrimination, therefore remains in any case, whatever may be the extent or the nature of the prohibition. To that end, it is not enough to adopt the criterion of reciprocity between States possessing installations on the sea-bed. If we wish to do without a system of international control, we shall have to find another solution -- which is very problematical -- that would make it possible to subject existing installations to a control exercised even by States parties to the treaty which do not possess such installations. On the other hand it has not been proved that international control machinery would necessarily have to be more complex and more burdensome than the many national systems as a whole or than reciprocity.

55. I should also like to recall that various delegations have expressed doubts in this connexion, wondering whether a system of national controls would really be sufficient. The representative of Brazil in his statement on 22 April recalled in this regard that:

> "It might be that a purely reciprocal system of verification would create practical difficulties, for not all States would be in a position to exercise a thorough inspection of underwater installations" (ENDC/PV.405, para.30).

At the same meeting the representative of Sweden made similar reservations and said:

> "As States have different capacities for participating in this form of control, some sort of international co-operation may be necessary" (ibid., para.93).

The representative of India was even more explicit when he said on 17 April:

> "The issue of verification for a sea-bed treaty would have to be dealt with in the light of the principle of international means of verification so that all parties could feel assured that the prohibitions of the treaty were being complied with" (ENDC/PV.404, para.70).

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I therefore conclude that it is possible and necessary to study this problem in greater detail and to study the system of international control that would be the least burdensome.

56. In concluding these few comments, I should like to express the hope that they will, like the comments made by other delegations, be studied attentively in order that the final text of a possible treaty may be the result of work done collectively by the Eighteen-Nation Committee and that that text may take into account, as far as possible, the largest number of opinions which have been expressed here.

The Conference decided to issue the following communiqué:

"The Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament today held its 410th plenary meeting in the Palais des Nations, Geneva, under the chairmanship of H.E. Ambassador Sergio Armando Frazão, representative of Brazil.

"Statements were made by the representatives of Canada, Bulgaria and Italy.

"The next meeting of the Conference will be held on Thursday, 15 May 1969, at 10.30 a.m."

The meeting rose at 12.50 p.m.